

Statement on East Timor

by Kiyoko Furusawa
Free East Timor Japan Coalition

United Nations Special Committee on Decolonialization
August 12, 1988

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Delegates,

On behalf of the *Free East Timor Japan Coalition*, which is composed of the Catholic Peace and Justice Committee in Japan and East Timor Solidarity groups based in Sendai, Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka, Okayama, Zentsuji, and Kure, I express my deepest gratitude to your Committee for allowing me to make a statement on East Timor today.

To our greatest disappointment, our country Japan is called the biggest sponsor of the Indonesian invasion of East Timor. Therefore, we started our activities to press our government to switch from sponsoring the invasion to promoting peace talks on East Timor. To our greatest pleasure, a new East Timor Solidarity group has formed in Japan every year. And this April, all these groups together with the Catholic Peace and Justice Committee in Japan organized the *Free East Timor Japan Coalition*. Discussions with our government have already started. Before the U.N. Human Rights Commission in Geneva, representatives from Amnesty International Japan, representatives of East Timor Solidarity groups, and representatives of the Dietmen's Forum on East Timor visited the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. We are very impressed to hear the Head of the Division on Human Rights and Refugees in the Bureau of the United Nations state that the Ministry will not ignore the voice of her people.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Delegates, since 1985 we have invited East Timorese to Japan every year. By these East Timorese we have been informed of the abnormal situation in East Timor after the Indonesian invasion. The illegal occupation by the Indonesian army is still going on, in spite of the resolutions in the U.N. General Assembly to support the right of self-determination of the people of East Timor.

Military operations repeated to crush the resistance of the people, contrary to the statement by the Japanese government that East Timor is effectively controlled by Indonesia. The reports on extrajudicial arrests, imprisonments, killings, torture, and rape of women. Compulsory sterilization and birth control imposed on the East Timorese women. Natural resources monopolized by the Indonesian company run by generals of the army. Not allowing to issue working permits in case people refused to accept Indonesian nationality. Indonesian history and Indonesian language taught in schools. But from such an East Timor we have received two precious gifts.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Delegates, the first gift we received from the struggle of East Timor is the pride of human being, seeking for freedom and independence. Msgr. Da Costa Lopes said "we cannot trade the right to self-determination for anything". No matter how wonderful the hospitals, schools, bridges and roads are, East Timorese are prepared to endure poverty in the country where the people of East Timor can rule themselves. In fact, the enemy of East Timor is not only the Indonesian army, but also the people living in rich, "peaceful", and "democratic" countries who no longer are concerned about "freedom" and "independence" for themselves. The people of East Timor tell us to think for ourselves, be concerned about our society and change our society.

When general Murdani, the defence minister of Indonesia, visited Japan, we asked the Indonesian embassy whether we could meet him and talk with him. Our request was turned down, but we passed a letter to general Murdani through the Indonesian embassy. In that letter we told him the development imposed by foreigners is just another type of violence. We

could say that according to the Indonesian history, Indonesian people did refuse the Dutch development policies including so-called ethical policies and instead wanted independence. According to our history in Japan, we can say that development without democratic decision making is nothing but violence.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Delegates, the other gift we received from East Timor is the mirror in which we can see ourselves. Looking at the attitude that our government has taken on the issue of East Timor, we can easily find out what our society is really like. Japan has continued to vote against the resolution on East Timor in the United Nations. I am obliged to say that our country chose to maintain good relations with Indonesia rather than to support the rights to self-determination of the people of East Timor. Japan depends on Indonesia for about ten percent of its oil, more than forty percent of L.N.G., various minerals, metals, timber, and sea products. Indonesia buys a lot of products necessary for her industrialization from Japan. Japan is the biggest trading partner of Indonesia. To protect the market, the suppliers of natural resources and the anti-communist Suharto government, Japan has continued to provide the biggest O.D.A. to the Indonesian government. And this aid has increased more and more, even after the invasion of East Timor. We must conclude that Japan has indirectly given a positive approval of the invasion of East Timor.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Delegates, many petitions will show you what has been happening in East Timor, and how horrible and how abnormal the situation is there for human beings. I think I do not have to repeat all these stories.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Delegates, what has brought me here from Japan is that I have to tell you about the fact that East Timor is shut out by Indonesia from the outside world, a fact for which our Japanese government carries a heavy responsibility. Not being accessible is one of the main causes for the human rights violations in East Timor. In 1985, parliamentary delegations of West Germany have visited East Timor, commented "East Timor itself is like a prison". Visits to East Timor by foreigners are still strongly controlled by Indonesian authorities. According to East Timorese who submitted the petition to the subcommission on prevention of discrimination and protection of minorities in Geneva last year, the activities of I.C.R.C., the International Commission of Red Cross, is controlled by the army and the communication of I.C.R.C. with the East Timorese is always watched by the army. Sometimes the army gets into the truck of I.C.R.C. and checks the people who try to speak to the staff. Indonesian authorities have admitted selected journalists and diplomats on visits of a few days. Everybody knows these visits are organized by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and that the visitors are accompanied by the army. The officials of the Japanese embassy in Jakarta were allowed to visit East Timor for a few days last August. The Foreign Ministry said that they could walk freely in the town and they were told that they could go outside the town by themselves. So we asked to which part of East Timor they went by themselves. The Ministry answered "the people of the embassy did not request to go anywhere further". Visitors who refuse to see the real situation are effectively collaborating with the occupying forces.

We asked the Ministry "Do you think that people at gun point, under military occupation, can freely speak what they feel?" They did not answer our question. Where they are

shut out from the media of the world, where there is a military occupation, the Indonesian army can mistreat the people of East Timor in any way they want.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Delegates, we are very glad that we heard the news in 1985, that the radio contact between East Timor and Darwin was reopened. But we are informed that this radio station has been continuously attacked by the Indonesian army.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Delegates, we now strongly doubt that Japanese aid to Indonesian Radio Monitoring Project is assisting these attacks. According to the evaluation reports on economic cooperation published by the Japanese Foreign Ministry in March 1987, the Japanese government provided 20 million dollar of Yen Loan to the Indonesian Radio Monitoring Project. The report told that the purpose of this project was to detect illegal radio communications. To check the various types of communications, they set up the necessary equipment to analyze the frequency, strength, and the place of broadcasting. They built 21 monitoring stations all over Indonesia. The project includes providing engineering service. These stations were established by 1985, but last year an additional 40 million dollar was assigned to this project.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Delegates, we found out that one monitoring station was built in Kupang, the western part of Timor island. We also found out that a semi-fixed station which is like a trailer truck was also provided to that project. The report said that this semi-fixed station was for VHF and UHF television waves. But it is so easy to change its function to monitor short waves with some additional equipment.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Delegates, we conclude that it is highly probable that this aid project will support the attack toward the radio stations of the resistance in the mountains in East Timor, and will support the jamming the radio contact with Darwin. We also conclude that in this sense, this aid is against the resolution passed in the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives on April 5th 1978 not to provide aid which is military or promotes international conflict. We are very shocked to find that the contract of this project was signed in November 1979. It was at the time that the greatest starvation was prevailing, after the three large-scale military operations.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Delegates, we will ask questions about this project in our Diet at the next session. There will also be a discussion concerning the enactment of the new O.D.A. law. Within the framework of this new O.D.A. law, the information on O.D.A. is to be made more open to the people, and the supervision of the national Diet over the administration of O.D.A. is to be strengthened. We are going to connect these two issues, so that we will be able to investigate not only the case of the radio monitoring project, but also the content of Japanese O.D.A. provided to Indonesia overall.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Delegates, the Indonesian government has a very strong sponsor who has a lot of money. This sponsor is kind enough to pledge 2.3 billion dollars to give to Indonesia without spending even a word on East Timor, without mentioning the expenditure on military operations in East Timor and their diplomatic activities to wipe out the issue of East Timor.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Delegates, we are small citizens in a big, rich Japan. I will end this petition by telling you about one of our activities in Japan. In my country all the school textbooks up to high school must clear government approval. Naturally, this system gives the government enormous power over the content of school textbooks. We checked all the school text books for junior high school students, and found that in most cases East Timor was regarded as a territory of Indonesia. This is not correct, even according to the official standard of the Japanese government. The fact is that they regard East Timor as a area of international conflict, and they are observing the talks between Portugal and Indonesia, mediated by the Secretary General of the United Nations concerning the sovereignty of East Timor. We contacted all the school book publishing companies, and until now three companies have promised to change their maps and put an international conflict boundary across the island of Timor. As long as the resistance of the people continues, we will continue to revive the existence of East Timor on every map of Timor, on every map of Asia, in Japan. We will never forget the invasion of East Timor.

I hope that you, too, will never forget the invasion of East Timor. For that, I thank you wholeheartedly.